

English Literature for Secondary Schools  
*General Editor* :—J. H. FOWLER, M. A.

## BRITISH ORATORS





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TORONTO

# British Orators

*Passages Selected and Arranged by*

J. H. Fowler

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## INTRODUCTION

ORATORY has often been turned to such base uses that it is small wonder it should sometimes seem, as it seemed to Plato, "the art of making the worse reason appear the better." Among the ancient Athenians it was so powerful in the law-courts and assembly that their sense of its power led them to think of Persuasion as a goddess; but Euripides only put into words the thought that must have been in many Athenian hearts when he made one of his characters utter the wish that facts could speak for themselves "that clever speeches might be of no avail."

Well, if that pious wish could be fulfilled, we might be content to leave the art of rhetoric to dishonest schemers. But, the world being what it is, the honest man as well as the knave has to learn to put his case—to marshal his facts, to express himself clearly and convincingly. Nor need we really regret that it should be so. As Hamlet says,

"Sure he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and godlike reason  
To fust in us unused "

It is true that Hamlet's "discourse" was "reason," not "eloquence," yet when he claimed that it was the power of "discourse" that raised man above the level of the beast, he meant that power of reasoning which is cultivated by the arts of logic and rhetoric—that power which is so closely connected with the art of speech that the word "discourse" has slipped by easy stages from the one meaning to the other.



And if we examine the speeches that the world has chosen to remember—the specimens collected in this book, for example—we shall find cause to raise, not to lower, our opinion of the orator's art. For what are the qualities that distinguish the really effective speech ?

If we are thinking simply of the effect produced at the moment, there are some qualities that do not appear on the printed page : charm of manner, clearness of enunciation, the sympathy of the audience with the speaker, the speaker's quickness in watching the effect of his own words and keeping in touch with his hearers. These things may often not be traceable at all as we read the speech long afterwards ; though sometimes they are preserved for us by tradition, and in other cases we can conjecture them, as when the charm or force of the orator's personality reveals itself in some touch of autobiography or of infectious humour.

But the qualities that make a speech live in history and literature are evident to the careful reader ; and they are wholly desirable and admirable.

First, genuine oratory, as a part of literature, will bear the test that may and should be applied to all literature—"thorough truth of substance and an answering truth of style." It will be "the best thought expressed in the best possible way" There will be no tawdry ornament about it—no attempt to hide the poverty of a case by dressing it up in fine words, no sophistical quibbling, no mere phrase-making ; the words will say what they mean and mean what they say. *Truth*, intellectual and moral sincerity, will be our first test.

Secondly, there is the test of *clearness*. The argument, as often in Burke's speeches, may be too difficult to be followed easily at the first reading ; but the difficulty will in no case be due to confused thinking.

Thirdly, the thought will carry us beyond the immediate occasion. The speech lives because it is not "over and done with" when the occasion that prompted it is past.

It appeals to general principles that are never out-of-date—those facts of human nature which are the same in every age, and which it is the first business of those who would influence their fellow-men to learn—or, on a loftier level, those divine laws of Justice of which the Greek poet wrote long ago, that they

“do live and move on high,  
Set in eternal spheres,  
Born in the bright expanse of upper sky,  
Birth of the high God, not of mortal years,  
Nor unto dull oblivion a prey.  
Strong, ageless deity is theirs and waneth not away”<sup>1</sup>

A fourth characteristic will be *elevation*. As the great orator is a man of loftier conceptions than the average man, not merely a man of “common ideas and uncommon abilities,” so his speech will make his audience momentarily, perhaps even permanently, better than themselves. For as a crowd can do base things of which almost any individual in it would be ashamed, so it can be lifted beyond itself by the electrical thrill of a great man’s passion. “We ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America,” said Burke, “with the old warning of the Church, *Sursum corda!*” (“Lift up your hearts!”). To how many readers have those words of his come as just such an inspiring call! There are other occasions when the speaker’s duty is not to persuade but to find a voice for the aspirations or pent-up emotion of a people. The sentences of President Lincoln’s discourse at Gettysburg (No. 32), for all their unadorned simplicity, fall upon our ears like strains of the Dead March in “Saul.”

Fifthly, *beauty*. The taste for ornament in oratory, as in architecture or the decoration of the house, varies from age to age, and rhetorical flourishes that are admired by one generation may be disliked or despised by another. Yet the perfect flower of human speech never fails of its effect—

<sup>1</sup> Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, trans by Morshead.

the "beauty born of murmuring sound," of subtle alliterations, ear-satisfying cadences, noble imagery. It is natural to us to delight in these things, though we can only retain our delight when we feel that the theme is adequate—that (to come back to the point from which we started) there is "thorough truth of substance and an answering truth of style"—that the thought is worthy of the beautiful dress in which it is clothed, or, better still, that a noble thought has found its one right expression.

How far are great speeches of use as models? The style of a speech must be fitted to the occasion: great speeches are called forth by great occasions, and their style is not for every day. The main purpose of this book is to introduce the reader to a department of English prose literature—not to teach him the art of speaking. Yet to live awhile in the atmosphere of great speeches is to refine the taste and cultivate the ear; and in proportion as we learn to enjoy good speaking we grow impatient with what is merely commonplace. Indirectly, therefore, the study of oratory should be of service to any speaker.

A great orator of the last generation, Mr. Gladstone, furnished a correspondent with the following rules for public speaking:

"1. Study plainness of language, always preferring the simpler word. 2. Shortness of sentences. 3. Distinctness of articulation. 4. Test and question your own arguments beforehand, not waiting for critic or opponent. 5. Seek a thorough digestion of, and familiarity with, your subject and rely mainly on these to prompt the proper words. 6. Remember that if you are to sway an audience you must, besides thinking out your matter, watch them all along."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gladstone did not always obey his first two rules, but they are excellent rules notwithstanding. Avoid circumlocution: say what you want to say simply and briefly. It

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol i p 192.

is often the half-educated man who indulges most in periphrasis. Thus it was an illiterate American millionaire who sent an author this pretentious testimonial: "I am of opinion that your literary performance entitles you to be understood as a mundane benefactor." An educated man would have been content to say: "You have done a very useful piece of work."

I owe thanks to the Prime Minister and Messrs. Methuen for their kind permission to include an extract from the historic speech of August 6, 1914; and to Messrs. Macmillan for leave to include the extracts from Dean Church and Lord Morley. It is further a pleasure to acknowledge that my attention was called to the passage from F. W. Robertson by Mrs. Laurence Binyon's *Nineteenth Century Prose*, and that Nos. 24 and 27 were suggested by my friend, Mr. G. G. Butler, of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

J. H. F.



## HUGH LATIMER (1485 ?-1555).

### 1. ST. ANTHONY'S FELLOWS.

I READ once a story of a holy man, (some say it was St. Anthony,) which had been a long season in the wilderness, neither eating nor drinking anything but bread and water : at the length he thought himself so holy that there should be nobody like unto him. Therefore he desired of God to know who should be his fellow in heaven. God made him answer, and commanded him to go to Alexandria : there he should find a cobbler which should be his fellow in heaven. Now he went thither and sought him out, and fell in acquaintance with him, and tarried with him three or four days to see his conversation. In the morning his wife and he prayed together ; then they went to their business, he in his shop, and she about her housewifery. At dinner-time they had bread and cheese, wherewith they were well content, and took it thankfully. Their children were well taught to fear God, and to say their *Pater-noster*, and the Creed, and the Ten Commandments ; and so he spent his time in doing his duty truly. I warrant you, he did not so many false stitches as cobblers do now-a-days. St. Anthony perceiving that, came to knowledge of

himself, and laid away all pride and presumption. By this ensample you may learn that honest conversation and godly living is much regarded before God, insomuch that this poor cobbler, doing his duty diligently, was made St. Anthony's fellow. So it appeareth that we be not destitute of religious houses : those which apply their business uprightly and hear  
30 God's word, they shall be St. Anthony's fellows : that is to say, they shall be numbered amongst the children of God.

*Sermons*

### QUEEN ELIZABETH (1533-1603).

#### 2. SPEECH TO HER ARMY AT TILBURY, 1588.

My loving people, we have been persuaded by some, that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery ; but assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear : I have always so behaved myself, that under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects. And therefore I am come amongst you at this time, not  
10 as for my recreation or sport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all : to lay down, for my God, and for my kingdom, and for my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a king, and of a king of England too : and think foul

scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realms : to which, rather than any dishonour should grow by me, I myself will take up arms : I myself will be your 20 general, judge and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field I know already, by your forwardness, that you have deserved rewards and crowns ; and we do assure you, on the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you In the mean time my lieutenant-general shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble and worthy subject ; not doubting by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over 30 those enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.

## OLIVER CROMWELL (1599–1658).

### 3 A PIECE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I WAS a person who, from my first employment, was suddenly preferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater ; from my first being a Captain of a Troop of Horse ; and did labour as well as I could to discharge my trust ; and God blessed me therein as it pleased him. . . . I had a very worthy friend then ; and he was a very noble person, and I know his memory is very grateful to all,—Mr. John Hampden. At my first going out into this engagement I saw our men were beaten at every 10



hand. I did indeed ; and desired him that he would make some additions to my Lord Essex's army of some new regiments ; and I told him I would be serviceable to him in bringing such men in as I thought had a spirit would do something in the work. . . . " Your troops," said I, " are most of them old decayed serving-men and tapsters and such kind of fellows ; and," said I, " their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality : do you  
20 think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage and resolution in them ? " Truly I did represent to him in this manner conscientiously ; and truly I did tell him : " You must get men of a spirit : and take it not ill what I say—I know you will not—of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go : or else you will be beaten still." I told him so ; I did truly. He was a wise and worthy person ; and he did think that I talked a  
30 good notion but an impracticable one. . . . The result was—impute it to what you please,—I raised such men as had the fear of God before them, as made some conscience of what they did ; and from that day forward, I must say to you, they were never beaten, and wherever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually. And truly this is matter of praise to God : and it hath some instruction in it, to own men who are religious and godly.

*Speech to his Second Parliament, April 13, 1657.*

## JEREMY TAYLOR (1613-1687).

## 4. CONTENTMENT.

It conduces much to our content, if we pass by those things which happen to our trouble, and consider that which is pleasing and prosperous; that by the representation of the better, the worse may be blotted out: and at the worst you have enough to keep you alive, and to keep up and to improve your hopes of Heaven. . . .

It may be thou art entered into the cloud which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows. . . .

I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me: what now? let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse; and, unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they still have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the Gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too: and still I sleep and digest, I eat and drink, I read and meditate, I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God Himself. And he that hath so many causes of joy and so great is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness, who loses all these pleasures and chooses to sit down upon his little handful of thorns.

*Holy Living, II. vi.*

## ROBERT SOUTH (1634–1716).

## 5 BUSYBODIES

THERE are some, whose restless, insinuating, searching humour will never suffer them to be quiet, unless they dive into the concerns of all about them ; they are always outward bound, but homeward never ; they are perpetually looking about them, but never within them ; they can hardly relish or digest what they eat at their own table, unless they know what and how much is served up to another man's ; they cannot sleep quietly themselves, unless they know  
10 when their neighbour rises and goes to bed ; they must know who visits him, and who is visited by him ; what company he keeps ; what revenues he has and what he spends ; how much he owes and how much is owed to him. And this, in the judgment of some, is to be a man of business ; that is, in other words, to be a plague and a spy, a treacherous supplanter and underminer of the peace of all families and societies. This being a maxim of an unfailing truth, that nobody ever pries into another man's  
20 concerns, but with a design to do or to be able to do him a mischief. A most detestable humour doubtless, and yet, as bad as it is, since there is nothing so base, barbarous, and dishonourable, but power joined with malice will sometimes make use of it, it may, and often does, raise a man a pitch higher in this world, though (it is to be feared) it may send him a large step lower in the next.

WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM  
(1708-1778).

6. REPLY TO AN ATTACK BY HORATIO WALPOLE.

SIR, the atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honourable gentleman has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience. Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach, I will not, sir, assume the province of determining; but surely age may become justly contemptible, if the opportunities which it brings have passed away without improvement, and vice appears to prevail when the passions have subsided. The wretch who, after having seen the consequences of a thousand errors, continues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, is surely the object either of abhorrence or contempt, and deserves not that his gray hairs should secure him from insult. Much more, sir, is he to be abhorred who, as he has advanced in age, has receded from virtue, and become more 20 wicked with less temptation; who prostitutes himself for money which he cannot enjoy, and spends the remains of his life in the ruin of his country.

But youth, sir, is not my only crime; I have been accused of acting a theatrical part. A theatrical part may either imply some peculiarities of gesture, or a dissimulation of my real sentiments, and an

adoption of the opinions and language of another man. In the first sense, sir, the charge is too trifling  
30 to be confuted, and deserves only to be mentioned that it may be despised. I am at liberty, like every other man, to use my own language; and though, perhaps, I may have some ambition, yet, to please this gentleman, I shall not lay myself under any restraint, nor very solicitously copy his diction or his mien, however matured by age or modelled by experience. But if any man shall, by charging me with theatrical behaviour, imply that I utter any sentiment but my own, I shall treat him as a calum-  
40 niator and a villain; nor shall any protection shelter him from the treatment he deserves. I shall, on such an occasion, without scruple trample upon all those forms with which wealth and dignity entrench themselves: nor shall anything but age restrain my resentment; age, which always brings one privilege, that of being insolent and supercilious without punishment.

But with regard, sir, to those whom I have offended, I am of opinion that if I had acted a borrowed part  
50 I should have avoided their censure; the heat that offended them is the ardour of conviction and that zeal for the service of my country which neither hope nor fear shall influence me to suppress. I will not sit unconcerned while my liberty is invaded nor look in silence upon public robbery. I will exert my endeavours at whatever hazard to repel the aggressor and drag the thief to justice, whoever may protect him in his villainy and whoever may partake of his plunder.

*Speech in House of Commons, March 6, 1741.*

## JUNIUS [SIR PHILIP FRANCIS, 1740-1818].

## 7. THE CITIZEN'S DUTY TO HIMSELF.

PROFESSIONS of patriotism are become stale and ridiculous. For my own part, I claim no merit from endeavouring to do a service to my fellow-subjects. I have done it to the best of my understanding: and, without looking for the approbation of other men, my conscience is satisfied. What remains to be done concerns the collective body of the people. They are now to determine for themselves whether they will firmly and constitutionally assert their rights, or make an humble slavish surrender of them at the feet of the ministry. To a generous mind there cannot be a doubt. We owe it to our ancestors to preserve entire those rights which they have delivered to our care. We owe it to our posterity, not to suffer their dearest inheritance to be destroyed. But if it were possible for us to be insensible of these sacred claims, there is yet an obligation binding upon ourselves, from which nothing can acquit us, a personal interest which we cannot surrender. To alienate even our own rights would be a crime as much more enormous than suicide, as a life of civil security and freedom is superior to a bare existence; and if life be the bounty of heaven, we scornfully reject the noblest part of the gift if we consent to surrender that certain rule of living without which the condition of human nature is not only miserable but contemptible.

*Letter XX. 1769.*

## 8. LETTER TO THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

MY LORD,—You are so little accustomed to receive any marks of respect or esteem from the public, that if in the following lines a compliment or expression of applause should escape me, I fear you would consider it as a mockery of your established character and perhaps an insult to your understanding. You have nice feelings, my lord, if we may judge from your resentments. Cautious therefore of giving offence where you have so little deserved it, I shall  
10 leave the illustration of your virtues to other hands. Your friends have a privilege to play upon the easiness of your temper, or possibly they are better acquainted with your good qualities than I am. You have done good by stealth. The rest is upon record. You have still left ample room for speculation when panegyric is exhausted.

You are indeed a very considerable man. The highest rank, a splendid fortune, and a name glorious till it was yours, were sufficient to have supported  
20 you with meaner abilities than I think you possess. From the first you derived a constitutional claim to respect; from the second, a natural extensive authority;—the last created a partial expectation of hereditary virtues. The use you have made of these uncommon advantages might have been more honourable to yourself, but could not be more instructive to mankind. We may trace it in the veneration of your country, the choice of your friends, and in the accomplishment of every sanguine hope which the

public might have conceived from the illustrious name 30  
of Russell.

The eminence of your station gave you a commanding prospect of your duty. The road which led to honour was open to your view. You could not lose it by mistake, and you had no temptation to depart from it by design. Compare the natural dignity and importance of the richest peer of England ;—the noble independence which he might have maintained in parliament, and the real interest and respect which he might have acquired, not only in 40  
parliament, but through the whole kingdom ; compare these glorious distinctions with the ambition of holding a share in government, the emoluments of a place, the sale of a borough, or the purchase of a corporation ; and though you may not regret the virtues which create respect, you may see with anguish how much real importance and authority you have lost. Consider the character of an independent, virtuous Duke of Bedford ; imagine what he might be in this country, then reflect one moment 50  
upon what you are. If it be possible for me to withdraw my attention from the fact, I will tell you in theory what such a man might be.

Conscious of his own weight and importance, his conduct in parliament would be directed by nothing but the constitutional duty of a peer. He would consider himself as a guardian of the laws. Willing to support the just measures of government, but determined to observe the conduct of the minister with suspicion, he would oppose the violence of 60  
faction with as much firmness as the encroachments



of prerogative. He would be as little capable of bargaining with the minister for places for himself or his dependants, as of descending to mix himself in the intrigues of opposition. Whenever an important question called for his opinion in parliament, he would be heard by the most profligate minister with deference and respect. His authority would either sanctify or disgrace the measures of government. The people would look up to him as to their protector, and a virtuous prince would have one honest man in his dominions in whose integrity and judgment he might safely confide. If it should be the will of Providence to afflict him with a domestic misfortune, he would submit to the stroke with feeling but not without dignity. He would consider the people as his children, and receive a generous heartfelt consolation in the sympathising tears and blessings of his country.

80 Your grace may probably discover something more intelligible in the negative part of this illustrious character. The man I have described would never prostitute his dignity in parliament by an indecent violence either in opposing or defending a minister. He would not at one moment rancorously persecute, at another basely cringe to the favourite of his sovereign. After outraging the royal dignity with peremptory conditions little short of menace and hostility, he would never descend to the humility  
90 of soliciting an interview with the favourite, and of offering to recover at any price the honour of his friendship. Though deceived perhaps in his youth, he would not through the course of a long life have

invariably chosen his friends from among the most profligate of mankind. His own honour would have forbidden him from mixing his private pleasures or conversation with jockeys, gamesters, blasphemers, gladiators, or buffoons. He would then have never felt, much less would he have submitted to the humiliating, dishonest necessity of engaging in the interest and intrigues of his dependants, of supplying their vices or relieving their beggary, at the expense of his country. He would not have betrayed such ignorance, or such contempt of the constitution, as openly to avow, in a court of justice, the purchase and sale of a borough. He would not have thought it consistent with his rank in the state, or even with his personal importance, to be the little tyrant of a little corporation. He would never have been insulted with virtues which he had laboured to extinguish, nor suffered the disgrace of a mortifying defeat, which has made him ridiculous and contemptible even to the few by whom he was not detested. I reverence the afflictions of a good man, —his sorrows are sacred. But how can we take part in the distresses of a man whom we can neither love nor esteem, or feel for a calamity of which he himself is insensible? Where was the father's heart, when he could look for or find an immediate consolation for the loss of an only son, in consultations and bargains for a place at court and even in the misery of balloting at the India House?

*Letter XXIII Sept 19, 1769.*

## EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797).

## 9. THE AMERICAN WHALE-FISHERS.

As to the wealth which the colonies have drawn from the sea by their fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar. You surely thought those acquisitions of value, for they seemed even to excite your envy ; and yet the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised your esteem and admiration. And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it ? Pass by the other parts, and look  
10 at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis' Strait ; whilst we are looking for them beneath the Arctic Circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent of the South. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote  
20 and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that whilst some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude, and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their

fisheries No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the <sup>30</sup> activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hard industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people—a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. When I contemplate these things ; when I know that the colonies in general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious govern- <sup>40</sup> ment, but that through a wise and salutary neglect a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection ; when I reflect upon these effects, when I see how profitable they have been to us, I feel all the pride of power sink, and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die away within me. My rigour relents. I pardon something to the spirit of liberty

*Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775.*

#### 10. A STATESMAN'S AIMS.

BUT if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may chance never to be elected into Parliament. It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of Parliament, to have my share of doing good and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects in order to obtain my seat I deceive myself indeed most grossly, if I had not much rather pass

the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the  
 10 deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the  
 visions and imaginations of such things, than to be  
 placed on the most splendid throne in the universe,  
 tantalised with a denial of the practice of all which  
 can make the greatest situation any other than the  
 greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I  
 can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you  
 for having set me in a place wherein I could lend the  
 slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I  
 have had my share in any measure giving quiet to  
 20 private property and private conscience; if by my  
 vote I have aided in securing to families the best  
 possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling  
 kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince;  
 if I have thus taken my part with the best of men  
 in the best of their actions, I can shut the book.  
 I might wish to read a page or two more; but this  
 is enough for my measure. I have not lived in vain.

*Speech at Bristol, 1780.*

#### 11. PANEGYRIC ON FOX.

AND now, having done my duty to the bill, let me  
 say a word to the author. I should leave him to  
 his own noble sentiments, if the unworthy and  
 illiberal language with which he has been treated,  
 beyond all example of parliamentary liberty, did not  
 make a few words necessary; not so much in justice  
 to him, as to my own feelings. I must say, then,  
 that it will be a distinction honourable to the age,  
 that the rescue of the greatest number of the human

race that ever were so grievously oppressed, from 10  
the greatest tyranny that was ever exercised, has  
fallen to the lot of abilities and dispositions equal to  
the task; that it has fallen to one who has the  
enlargement to comprehend, the spirit to undertake,  
and the eloquence to support, so great a measure of  
hazardous benevolence. His spirit is not owing to  
his ignorance of the state of men and things; he  
well knows what snares are spread about his path,  
from personal animosity, from court intrigues, and  
possibly from popular delusion. But he has put to 20  
hazard his ease, his security, his interest, his power,  
even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people  
whom he has never seen. This is the road that all  
heroes have trod before him. He is traduced and  
abused for his supposed motives. He will remember  
that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the com-  
position of all true glory: he will remember that  
it was not only in the Roman customs, but it is in  
the nature and constitution of things, that calumny  
and abuse are essential parts of triumph. These 30  
thoughts will support a mind, which only exists for  
honour, under the burden of temporary reproach.  
He is doing indeed a great good; such as rarely  
falls to the lot, and almost as rarely coincides with  
the desires of any man. Let him use his time. Let  
him give the whole length of the reins to his benevo-  
lence. He is now on a great eminence, where the  
eyes of mankind are turned to him. He may live  
long, he may do much. But here is the summit.  
He never can exceed what he does this day. 40

*Speech on the East India Bill, Dec. 1, 1783.*

## 12. BACON AND WARREN HASTINGS: A CONTRAST.

WE know from history, and the records of this House, that a Lord Bacon has been before you. Who is there that, upon hearing this name, does not instantly recognise everything of genius the most profound, everything of literature the most extensive, everything of discovery the most penetrating, everything of observation on human life the most distinguishing and refined? All these must be instantly recognised, for they are all inseparably associated with the name  
10 of Lord Verulam. Yet when this prodigy was brought before your lordships by the Commons of Great Britain, for having permitted his menial servant to receive presents, what was his demeanour? Did he require his counsel not "to let down the dignity of his defence"? No That Lord Bacon, whose least distinction was, that he was a peer of England, a lord high chancellor, and the son of a lord keeper, behaved like a man who knew himself; like a man  
20 who was conscious of merits of the highest kind; but who was at the same time conscious of having fallen into guilt The House of Commons did not spare him. They brought him to your bar. They found spots in that sun And what, I again ask, was his behaviour? That of contrition, that of humility, that of repentance, that which belongs to the greatest men lapsed and fallen through human infirmity into error. He did not hurl defiance at the accusations of his country, he bowed himself before it, yet with all his penitence he could not  
30 escape the pursuit of the House of Commons and

the inflexible justice of this court Your lordships fined him forty thousand pounds, notwithstanding all his merits; notwithstanding his humility; notwithstanding his contrition; notwithstanding the decorum of his behaviour, so well suited to a man under the prosecution of the Commons of England, before the Peers of England. You fined him in a sum fully equal to one hundred thousand pounds of the present day; you imprisoned him during the king's pleasure; and you disqualified him for ever 40 from having a seat in this House, and any office in this kingdom. This is the way in which the Commons behaved formerly, and in which your lordships acted formerly; when no culprit at this bar dared to hurl a recriminatory accusation against his prosecutors, or dared to censure the language in which they expressed their indignation at his crimes.

*Speech in the Impeachment of Warren Hastings,  
May 28, 1794.*

### 13. THE END OF A GREAT TRIAL.

My lords, at this awful close, in the name of the Commons, and surrounded by them, I attest the retiring, I attest the advancing generations, between which, as a link in the great chain of eternal order, we stand. We call this nation, we call the world to witness, that the Commons have shrunk from no labour; that we have been guilty of no prevarication; that we have made no compromise with crime; that we have not feared any odium whatsoever, in the long warfare which we have carried on 10



with the crimes—with the vices—with the exorbitant wealth—with the enormous and overpowering influence of Eastern corruption

This war, my lords, we have waged for twenty-two years, and the conflict has been fought at your lordships' bar for the last seven years. My lords, twenty-two years is a great space in the scale of the life of man—it is no inconsiderable space in the history of a great nation. A business which has so  
20 long occupied the councils and tribunals of Great Britain, cannot possibly be huddled over in the course of vulgar, trite, and transitory events. Nothing but some of those great revolutions, that break the traditionary chain of human memory, and alter the very face of nature itself, can possibly obscure it. My lords, we are all elevated to a degree of importance by it; the meanest of us will, by means of it, more or less, become the concern of posterity, if we are yet to hope for such a thing in the present  
30 state of the world, as a recording retrospective civilised posterity. But this is in the hands of the great Disposer of events; it is not ours to settle how it shall be. My lords, your House yet stands—it stands as a great edifice; but let me say that it stands in the midst of ruins; in the midst of the ruins that have been made by the greatest moral earthquake that ever convulsed and shattered this globe of ours. My lords, it has pleased Providence to place us in such a state, that we appear every  
40 moment to be upon the verge of some great mutations. There is one thing and one thing only which defies all mutation—that which existed before the world,

and will survive the fabric of the world itself—I mean justice; that justice which, emanating from the Divinity, has a place in the breast of every one of us, given us for our guide with regard to ourselves and with regard to others, and which will stand, after this globe is burned to ashes, our advocate or our accuser before the great Judge when He comes to call upon us for the tenor of a well-spent life. 50

*Last Speech in the Impeachment of Warren Hastings,  
June 16, 1794*

### HENRY GRATTAN (1746-1820).

#### 14. PROTEST OF AN IRISH PATRIOT AGAINST THE ACT OF 'UNION.

IDENTIFICATION is a solid and imperial maxim, necessary for the preservation of freedom, necessary for that of empire; but without union of hearts—with a separate government, and without a separate parliament,—identification is extinction, is dishonour, is conquest—not identification. Yet I do not give up the country. I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead. Though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheek a glow of beauty— 10

‘Thou art not conquer’d; beauty’s ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks.  
And death’s pale flag is not advanced there.”

While a plank of the vessel sticks together, I will not leave her. Let the courtier present his flimsy sail, and carry the light bark of his faith, with every

new breath of wind : I will remain anchored here—with fidelity to the fortunes of my country, faithful to her freedom, faithful to her fall.

*Speech in House of Commons, May 26, 1800.*

## 15. SPEECH AGAINST NAPOLEON

### I

SIR, the French government is war, it is a stratocracy, elective, aggressive and predatory ; her armies live to fight and fight to live ; their constitution is essentially war, and the object of that war the conquest of Europe. What such a person as Bonaparte at the head of such a constitution will do, you may judge by what he has done : and, first, he took possession of the greater part of Europe ; he made his son King of Rome ; he made his son-in-law Viceroy  
10 of Italy ; he made his brother-in-law King of Naples ; he imprisoned the King of Spain ; he banished the Regent of Portugal ; and formed his plan to take possession of the crown of England : England had checked his designs ; her trident had stirred up his empire from its foundation ; he complained of her tyranny at sea, but it was her power at sea which arrested his tyranny on land ; the navy of England saved Europe. Knowing this, he knew the conquest of England became necessary for the accomplishment  
20 of the conquest of Europe, and the destruction of her marine necessary for the conquest of England. Accordingly, besides raising an army of 60,000 men for the invasion of England, he applied himself to

the destruction of her commerce, the foundation of her naval power. In pursuit of this object, and on his plan of a western empire, he conceived, and in part executed, the design of consigning to plunder and destruction the vast regions of Russia ; he quits the genial clime of the temperate zone , he bursts through the narrow limits of an immense empire ; 30 he abandons comfort and security, and he hurries to the pole, to hazard them all, and with them the companions of his victories, and the fame and fruits of his crimes and his talents, on a speculation of leaving in Europe, throughout the whole of its extent, no one free or independent nation To oppose this huge conception of mischief and despotism, the great potentate of the North, from his gloomy recess, advances to defend, against the voracity of ambition, the sterility of his empire. Ambition is omnivorous ; 40 it feasts on famine and sheds tuns of blood, that it may starve in ice, in order to commit a robbery on desolation. The power of the North, I say, joins another prince, whom Bonaparte deprived of almost the whole of his authority, the King of Prussia ; and then another potentate, whom Bonaparte had deprived of a principal part of his dominions, the Emperor of Austria. These three powers, physical causes, final justice, the influence of your victories in Spain and Portugal, and the spirit given to Europe 50 by the achievements and renown of your great commander (the Duke of Wellington), together with the precipitation of his own ambition, combined to accomplish his destruction. Bonaparte is conquered ; he who said, “ I will be like the Most High ” ; he who

smote the nations with a continual stroke ; this short-lived son of the morning, Lucifer, falls, and the earth is at rest : the phantom of royalty passes on to nothing, and the three kings to the gates of Paris ;  
60 there they stand, the late victims of his ambition, and now the disposers of his destiny and the masters of his empire : without provocation he had gone to their countries with fire and with sword ; with the greatest provocation they come to his country with life and liberty : they do an act unparalleled in the annals of history, such as nor envy, nor time, nor malice, nor prejudice, nor ingratitude, can efface ; they give to his subjects liberty, and to himself life and royalty. . . .

## II.

70 Gentlemen speak of the Bourbon family. I have already said, we should not force the Bourbon upon France ; but we owe it to departed (I would rather say to interrupted) greatness to observe, that the House of Bourbon was not tyrannical : under her, every thing except the administration of the country was open to animadversion ; every subject was open to discussion, philosophical, ecclesiastical, and political, so that learning, and arts, and sciences, made progress. Even England consented to borrow not a  
80 little from the temperate meridian of that government. Her court stood controlled by opinion, limited by principles of honour, and softened by the influence of manners ; and, on the whole, there was an amenity in the condition of France, which rendered the French an amiable, an enlightened, a gallant and accom-

plished race. Over this gallant race you see imposed an oriental despotism. Their present court (Bonaparte's court) has gotten the idiom of the East as well as her constitution ; a fantastic and barbaric expression ; an unreality, which leaves in the shade 90 the modesty of truth, and states nothing as it is, and every thing as it is not. The attitude is affected, the taste is corrupted, and the intellect perverted. Do you wish to confirm this military tyranny in the heart of Europe ? A tyranny founded on the triumph of the army over the principles of civil government ; tending to universalise throughout Europe the domination of the sword, and to reduce to paper and parchment Magna Charta and all our civil constitutions ? An experiment such as no country ever made, 100 and no good country would ever permit—to relax the moral and religious influences, to set heaven and earth adrift from one another, and make God Almighty a tolerated alien in his creation : an insurrectionary hope to every bad man in the community, and a frightful lesson of profit and power, vested in those who have pandered their allegiance from king to emperor, and now found their pretensions to domination on the merit of breaking their oaths and deposing their sovereign. Should you do any thing 110 so monstrous as to leave your allies in order to confirm such a system ; should you forget your name, forget your ancestors, and the inheritance they have left you of morality and renown ; should you astonish Europe, by quitting your allies to render immortal such a composition ; would not the nations exclaim ? —“ You have very providently watched over our

interests, and very generously have you contributed to our service, and do you falter now? In vain  
120 have you stopped in your own person the flying fortunes of Europe; in vain have you taken the eagle of Napoleon, and snatched *invincibility* from his standard; if now, when confederated Europe is ready to march, you take the lead in the desertion, and preach the penitence of Bonaparte and the poverty of England."

As to her poverty, you must not consider the money you spend in her defence, but the fortune you would lose if you were not defended; and further, you must  
130 recollect you will pay less to an immediate war than to a peace with a war establishment and a war to follow it. Recollect further, that whatever be your resources, they must outlast those of all your enemies; and further, that your empire cannot be saved by a calculation. Besides, your wealth is only a part of your situation. The name you have established, the deeds you have achieved, and the part you have sustained, preclude you from a second place among nations; and when you cease to be the first, you  
140 are nothing

*Speech in House of Commons, May 25, 1815.*

## WILLIAM PITT (THE YOUNGER : 1759-1806).

## 16. PEACE WITH NAPOLEON IMPOSSIBLE

BUT, supposing the confederacy of Europe prematurely dissolved ; supposing our armies disbanded, our fleets laid up in our harbours, our exertions relaxed, and our means of precaution and defence relinquished ; do we believe that the revolutionary power, with this rest and breathing time given it to recover from the pressure under which it is now sinking, possessing still the means of calling suddenly and violently into action whatever is the remaining physical force of France, under the guidance of 10 military despotism ; do we believe that this revolutionary power, the terror of which is now beginning to vanish, will not again prove formidable to Europe ? Can we forget that in the ten years in which that power has subsisted, it has brought more misery on surrounding nations, and produced more acts of aggression, cruelty, perfidy, and enormous ambition than can be traced in the history of France for the centuries which have elapsed since the foundation of its monarchy, including all the wars which, in the 20 course of that period, have been waged by any of those sovereigns, whose projects of aggrandisement and violations of treaty afford a constant theme of general reproach against the ancient government of France ? And if not, can we hesitate whether we have the best prospect of permanent peace, the best security for the independence and safety of Europe



from the restoration of the lawful government, or from the continuance of revolutionary power in the hands of Bonaparte ?

In compromise and treaty with such a power, placed in such hands as now exercise it, and retaining the same means of annoyance which it now possesses, I see little hope of permanent security. I see no possibility at this moment of such a peace as would justify that liberal intercourse which is the essence of real amity ; no chance of terminating the expenses or the anxieties of war, or of restoring to us any of the advantages of established tranquillity ; and, as  
40 a sincere lover of peace, I cannot be content with its nominal attainment. I must be desirous of pursuing that system which promises to attain, in the end, the permanent enjoyment of its solid and substantial blessings for this country and for Europe. As a sincere lover of peace, I will not sacrifice it by grasping at the shadow when the reality is not substantially within my reach. *Cur igitur pacem nolo ? Quia infida est, quia periculosa, quia esse non potest.*<sup>1</sup>

*Speech in House of Commons, Feb. 3, 1800.*

## GEORGE CANNING (1770–1827).

### 17. ENGLAND : A SIMILE.

BUT while we thus control even our feelings by our duty, let it not be said that we cultivate peace, either because we fear or because we are unprepared for

<sup>1</sup> Why then am I against peace ? Because it is faithless, because it is dangerous, because it cannot be maintained.

war ; on the contrary, if eight months ago the Government did not hesitate to proclaim that the country was prepared for war, if war should be unfortunately necessary, every month of peace that has since passed has but made us so much the more capable of exertion. The resources created by peace are means of war. In cherishing those resources we but accumulate those 10 means. Our present repose is no more a proof of inability to act, than the state of inertness in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town, is a proof they are devoid of strength, and incapable of being fitted out for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness—how soon, upon any call of patriotism or necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing, instinct with life and 20 motion—how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage, how quickly would it put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as is one of those magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might—such is England herself : while apparently passive and motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion.

*Speech at Plymouth, 1823*

#### 18. THE RULER OF THE WINDS

THE situation of England, amid the struggle of political opinions which agitates more or less sensibly different countries of the world, may be compared

to that of the Ruler of the Winds, as described by the poet :

Celsa sedet Aeolus arce  
Sceptra tenens, molitque animos et temperat iras ;  
Nū faciat, maria ac terras caelumque profundum  
Quippe ferant rapidi secum verrantque per auras.<sup>1</sup>

- 10 The consequence of letting loose the passions at present chained and confined, would be to produce a scene of desolation which no man can contemplate without horror ; and I should not sleep easy on my couch, if I were conscious that I had contributed to precipitate it by a single moment.

This then is the reason—a reason very different from fear—the reverse of a consciousness of disability—why I dread the recurrence of hostilities in any part of Europe ; why I would bear much, and would  
20 forbear long ; why I would (as I have said) put up with almost anything that did not touch national faith and national honour, rather than let slip the furies of war, the leash of which we hold in our hands—not knowing whom they may reach, or how far their ravages may be carried. Such is the love of peace which the British government acknowledges ;

<sup>1</sup> Virgil, *Aen* I 56-59 :

“ . . . Aeolus in a cavern vast  
With bolt and barrier fetters fast  
Rebelious storm and howling blast . . .  
He, throned on high, the sceptre sways,  
Controls their moods, their wrath allays.  
Break but that sceptre, sea and land  
And heaven's ethereal deep  
Before them they would whirl like sand  
And through the void air sweep ”—*Conington*.

and such the necessity for peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. I will push these topics no further.

*Speech in House of Commons, Dec. 12, 1826.*

## LORD BROUGHAM (1778-1868).

### 19. THE SIBYL.

My Lords, I do not disguise the intense solicitude which I feel for the event of this debate, because I know full well that the peace of the country is involved in the issue. I cannot look without dismay at the rejection of the measure. But grievous as may be consequences of a temporary defeat—temporary it can only be; for its ultimate, and even speedy success, is certain. Nothing can now stop it. Do not suffer yourselves to be persuaded that, even if the present ministers were driven from the helm, any one could steer you through the troubles which surround you without reform. But our successors will take up the task in circumstances far less auspicious. Under them, you will be fain to grant a bill, compared with which, the one we now proffer you is moderate indeed. Hear the parable of the Sibyl; for it conveys a wise and wholesome moral. She now appears at your gate, and offers you mildly the volumes—the precious volumes—of wisdom and peace. The price she asks is reasonable; to restore the franchise, which, without any bargain, you ought voluntarily to give. you refuse her terms—her moderate terms—she darkens the

porch no longer. But soon, for you cannot do without her wares, you call her back,—again she comes, but with diminished treasures; the leaves of the book are in part torn away by lawless hands—in part defaced with characters of blood. But the prophetic maid has risen in her demands. It is  
 30 parliaments by the year, it is vote by the ballot, it is suffrage by the million! From this you turn away indignant, and for the second time she departs. Beware of her third coming; for the treasure you must have; and what price she may next demand, who shall tell? It may even be the mace which rests upon that woolsack. What may follow your course of obstinacy, if persisted in, I cannot take upon me to predict, nor do I wish to conjecture. But this I know full well, that, as sure as man is  
 40 mortal, and to err is human, justice deferred enhances the price at which you must purchase safety and peace; nor can you expect to gather in another crop than they did who went before you, if you persevere in their utterly abominable husbandry, of sowing injustice and reaping rebellion.

*Speech on Reform Bill, House of Lords, 1831.*

## LORD MACAULAY (1800–1859).

### 20 PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

#### *I. The Lessons of the Present.*

THE question of Parliamentary Reform is still behind. But signs, of which it is impossible to misconceive the import, do most clearly indicate that unless that

question also be speedily settled, property, and order, and all the institutions of this great monarchy, will be exposed to fearful peril. Is it possible that gentlemen long versed in high political affairs cannot read these signs? Is it possible that they can really believe that the Representative system of England, such as it now is, will last to the year 1860? If 10 not, for what would they have us wait? Would they have us wait merely that we may show to all the world how little we have profited by our own recent experience? Would they have us wait, that we may once again hit the exact point where we can neither refuse with authority, nor concede with grace? Would they have us wait, that the numbers of the discontented party may become larger, its demands higher, its feelings more acrimonious, its organisation more complete? Would they have us wait till the 20 whole tragicomedy of 1827 has been acted over again? till they have been brought into office by a cry of "No Reform," to be reformers, as they were once before brought into office by a cry of "No Popery," to be emancipators? Have they obliterated from their minds—gladly, perhaps, would some among them obliterate from their minds—the transactions of that year? Have they forgotten how we were forced to indulge the Catholics in all the licence of rebels, merely because we chose to withhold from 30 them the liberties of subjects? Do they wait for associations more formidable than that of the Corn Exchange, for contributions larger than the Rent, for agitators more violent than those who, three years ago, divided with the King and the Parliament

the sovereignty of Ireland? Do they wait for that last and most dreadful paroxysm of popular rage, for that last and most cruel test of military fidelity? Let them wait, if their past experience shall induce  
40 them to think that any high honour or any exquisite pleasure is to be obtained by a policy like this. Let them wait, if this strange and fearful infatuation be indeed upon them, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears, or understand with their heart. But let us know our interest and our duty better. Turn where we may, within, around, the voice of great events is proclaiming to us, "Reform, that you may preserve." Now, therefore, while everything at home and abroad forebodes ruin  
50 to those who persist in a hopeless struggle against the spirit of the age, now, while the crash of the proudest throne of the Continent is still resounding in our ears, now, while the roof of a British palace affords an ignominious shelter to the exiled heir of forty kings, now, while we see on every side ancient institutions subverted, and great societies dissolved, now, while the heart of England is still sound, now, while old feelings and old associations retain a power and a charm which may too soon pass away, now,  
60 in this your accepted time, now, in this your day of salvation, take counsel, not of prejudice, not of party spirit, not of the ignominious pride of a fatal consistency, but of history, of reason, of the ages which are past, of the signs of this most portentous time.

*Speech in House of Commons, March 2, 1831.*

II. *The Lessons of the Past.*

THIS was the advice which a wise and honest Minister would have given to Charles the First. These were the principles on which that unhappy prince should have acted. But no. He would govern, I do not say ill, I do not say tyrannically ; I only say this ; he would govern the men of the seventeenth century as if they had been the men of the sixteenth century ; and therefore it was, that all his talents and all his virtues did not save him from unpopularity, from civil war, from a prison, from a bar, from a scaffold. 10 These things are written for our instruction. Another great intellectual revolution has taken place ; our lot has been cast on a time analogous, in many respects, to the time which immediately preceded the meeting of the Long Parliament. There is a change in society. There must be a corresponding change in the government. We are not, we cannot, in the nature of things, be, what our fathers were. We are no more like the men of the American War, or the men of the gagging bills, than the men who cried 20 "privilege" round the coach of Charles the First were like the men who changed their religion once a year at the bidding of Henry the Eighth. That there is such a change, I can no more doubt than I can doubt that we have more power-looms, more steam-engines, more gas-lights, than our ancestors. That there is such a change, the Minister will surely find who shall attempt to fit the yoke of Mr. Pitt to the necks of the Englishmen of the nineteenth



30 century. What then can you do to bring back those times when the constitution of this House was an object of veneration to the people? Even as much as Strafford and Laud could do to bring back the days of the Tudors; as much as Bonner and Gardiner could do to bring back the days of Hildebrand; as much as Villèle and Polignac could do to bring back the days of Louis the Fourteenth. You may make the change tedious; you may make it violent; you may—God in His mercy forbid!—you may make it  
40 bloody; but avert it you cannot. Agitations of the public mind, so deep and so long continued as those which we have witnessed, do not end in nothing. In peace or in convulsion, by the law, or in spite of the law, through the Parliament, or over the Parliament, Reform must be carried. Therefore be content to guide that movement which you cannot stop. Fling wide the gates to that force which else will enter through the breach. Then will it still be, as it has hitherto been, the peculiar glory of our con-  
50 stitution that, though not exempt from the decay which is wrought by the vicissitudes of fortune, and the lapse of time, in all the proudest works of human power and wisdom, it yet contains within it the means of self-reparation. Then will England add to her manifold titles of glory this, the noblest and the purest of all; that every blessing which other nations have been forced to seek, and have too often sought in vain, by means of violent and bloody revolutions, she will have attained by a peaceful and a lawful  
60 Reform.

*Speech in House of Commons on Second Reading of  
Reform Bill, Dec. 16, 1831.*

## JOHN BRIGHT (1811-1889).

## 22. THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

I CANNOT but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the very next mail from the East I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea ; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land ; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on ; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

I tell the noble Lord,<sup>1</sup> that if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour, by the negotiations about to be opened at Vienna, to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble Lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The noble Lord has been for more than forty years

<sup>1</sup> Lord Palmerston.

a Member of this House. Before I was born he sat upon the Treasury bench, and he has spent his life  
30 in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allotted to man. I would ask, I would entreat the noble Lord to take a course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career—whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret—cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition—having become the foremost sub-  
40 ject of the Crown, the director of, it may be, the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius in her councils—he had achieved a still higher and nobler ambition; that he had returned the sword to the scabbard—that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow—that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved this country from the indescribable calamities of war.

*Speech in House of Commons, Feb. 23, 1855.*

### 23. A PLEA FOR PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

Now, if my words should reach the ears and reach the heart of any man who is interested in the advancement of religion in this country, I ask him to consider whether there are not great political obstacles to the extension of civilisation and morality and religion within the bounds of the United Kingdom. We believe—these ministers, you and I—we believe in a Supreme Ruler of the Universe We believe in

His omnipotence ; we believe and we humbly trust in His mercy. We know that the strongest argument 10 which is used against that belief by those who reject it, is an argument drawn from the misery and the helplessness and the darkness of so many of our race, even in countries which call themselves civilised and Christian. Is not that the fact ? If I believed that this misery and this helplessness and this darkness could not be touched or transformed, I myself should be driven to admit the almost overwhelming force of that argument ; but I am convinced that just laws, and an enlightened administration of them, 20 would change the face of the country. I believe that ignorance and suffering might be lessened to an incalculable extent, and that many an Eden, beauteous in flowers and rich in fruits, might be raised up in the waste wilderness which spreads before us. But no class can do that. The class which has hitherto ruled in this country has failed miserably. It revels in power and wealth, whilst at its feet, a terrible peril for its future, lies the multitude which it has neglected. If a class has failed, let us try 30 the nation. That is our faith, that is our purpose, that is our cry—Let us try the nation. This it is which has called together these countless numbers of the people to demand a change ; and, as I think of it, and of these gatherings, sublime in their vastness and in their resolution, I think I see, as it were, above the hill-tops of time, the glimmerings of the dawn of a better and a nobler day for the country and for the people that I love so well.

*Speech at Glasgow, Oct 16, 1866.*

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, LORD BEACONSFIELD  
(1804–1881)

24 THE FEUDAL SYSTEM

GENTLEMEN, we hear a great deal in the present day upon the subject of the feudal system. I have heard from the lips of Mr. Cobden—no, I have not heard him say it, as I was not present to hear the celebrated speech he made in Drury Lane Theatre—but we have all heard how Mr. Cobden, who is a very eminent person, has said, in a very memorable speech, that England was the victim of the feudal system, and we have all heard how he has spoken  
10 of the barbarism of the feudal system, and of the barbarous relics of the feudal system. Now if we have any relics of the feudal system, I regret that not more of it is remaining. Think one moment—and it is well that you should be reminded of what this is, because there is no phrase more glibly used in the present day than “the barbarism of the feudal system.” Now what is the fundamental principle of the feudal system, gentlemen? It is that the tenure of all property shall be the performance of  
20 its duties. Why, when the conqueror carved out parts of the land, and introduced the feudal system, he said to the recipient, “You shall have that estate, but you shall do something for it: you shall feed the poor; you shall endow the church; you shall defend the land in case of war; and you shall execute justice and maintain truth to the poor for nothing”

It is all very well to talk of the barbarities of the

feudal system, and to tell us that in those days when it flourished a great variety of gross and grotesque circumstances and great miseries occurred; but these 30 were not the result of the feudal system: they were the result of the barbarism of the age. They existed not from the feudal system, but in spite of the feudal system. The principle of the feudal system, the principle which was practically operated upon, was the noblest principle, the grandest, the most magnificent and benevolent that was ever conceived by sage, or ever practised by patriot. Why, when I hear a political economist, or an Anti-Corn-Law Leaguer, or some conceited Liberal reviewer come 40 forward and tell us, as a grand discovery of modern science, twitting and taunting, perhaps, some unhappy squire who cannot respond to the alleged discovery—when I hear them say, as a great discovery of modern science, that “Property has its duties as well as its rights,” my answer is that that is but a feeble plagiarism of the very principle of that feudal system which you are always reviling.

*Speech to his Constituents, Shrewsbury, May 9, 1843.*

## F. W. ROBERTSON (1816–1853).

### 25 THE RED THREAD OF HONOUR.

POETRY has reached the truth, while science and common-sense have missed it. It has distinguished, as, in spite of all mercenary and feeble sophistry, men ever will distinguish, war from mere bloodshed. It has discerned the higher feelings which lie beneath

its revolting features. Carnage is terrible. The conversion of producers into destroyers is a calamity. Death, and insults to woman, worse than death—and human features obliterated beneath the hoof of  
10 the war-horse—and reeking hospitals, and ruined commerce, and violated homes, and broken hearts—they are all awful. But there is something worse than death. Cowardice is worse. And the decay of enthusiasm and manliness is worse. And it is worse than death—aye, worse than a hundred thousand deaths—when a people has gravitated down into the creed that the “wealth of nations” consists, not in generous hearts—“Fire in each breast, and freedom  
20 on each brow”—in national virtues, and primitive simplicity, and heroic endurance, and preference of duty to life—not in MEN, but in silk, and cotton, and something that they call “capital.” Peace is blessed—peace, arising out of charity. But peace springing out of the calculations of selfishness is not blessed. If the price to be paid for peace is this, that wealth accumulate and men decay, better far that every street in every town of our once noble country should run blood !

Through the physical horrors of warfare, Poetry  
30 discerned the redeeming nobleness. For in truth, when war is not prolonged, the kindling of all the higher passions prevents the access of the baser ones. A nation split and severed by mean religious and political dissensions suddenly feels its unity, and men’s hearts beat together at the mere possibility of invasion. And even woman, as the author of the *History of the Peninsular War* has well remarked,

sufferer as she is by war, yet gains; in the more chivalrous respect paid to her, in the elevation of the feelings excited towards her in the attitude of 40 protection assumed by men, and in the high calls to duty which arouse her from the frivolousness and feebleness into which her existence is apt to sink. I will illustrate this by one more anecdote from the same campaign to which allusion has been already made—Sir Charles Napier's campaign against the robber tribes of Upper Scinde.

A detachment of troops was marching along a valley, the cliffs overhanging which were crested by the enemy. A sergeant with eleven men chanced 50 to become separated from the rest by taking the wrong side of a ravine, which they expected soon to terminate, but which suddenly deepened into an impassable chasm. The officer in command signalled to the party an order to return. They mistook the signal for a command to charge; the brave fellows answered with a cheer, and charged. At the summit of the steep mountain was a triangular platform, defended by a breastwork, behind which were seventy of the foe. On they went, charging up one of those 60 fearful paths, eleven against seventy. The contest could not long be doubtful with such odds. One after another they fell—six upon the spot, the remainder hurled backwards; but not until they had slain nearly twice their own number.

There is a custom, we are told, amongst the hill-men, that when a great chieftain of their own falls in battle, his wrist is bound with a thread either of red or green, the red denoting the highest rank.



70 According to custom, they stripped the dead and threw their bodies over the precipice. When their comrades came they found their corpses stark and gashed ; but round both wrists of every British hero was twined the red thread !

I think you will perceive how Poetry, expressing in this rude symbolism unutterable admiration of heroic daring, had given another aspect to war than that of butchery , and you will understand how, with such a foe, and such a general as the English  
80 commander, who more than once refused battle because the wives and children of the enemy were in the hostile camp, and he feared for their lives, carnage changed its character and became chivalry ; and how it was that the British troops learned to treat their captive women with respect ; and the chieftains of the Cutchee Hills offered their swords and services with enthusiasm to their conqueror ; and the wild hill-tribes, transplanted to the plains, became as persevering in agriculture as they had  
90 been before in war.

*Lecture to Working Men, Brighton, 1852.*

R. W. CHURCH (1815–1890).

26 THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY.

THIS second springtide of the world, this fresh start of mankind in the career of their eventful destiny, was the beginning of many things ; but what I observe on now is that it was the beginning of new chances, new impulses, and new guarantees for

civilised life, in the truest and worthiest sense of the words. It was this, by bringing into society a morality which was serious and powerful, and a morality which would wear and last; one which could stand the shocks of human passion, the desolating spectacle of successful wickedness, the insidious waste of unconscious degeneracy,—one which could go back to its sacred springs and repair its fire and its strength. Such a morality, as Roman greatness was passing away, took possession of the ground. Its beginnings were scarcely felt, scarcely known of, in the vast movement of affairs in the greatest of empires. By and by its presence, strangely austere, strangely gentle, strangely tender, strangely inflexible, began to be noticed. But its work was long only a work of indirect preparation. Those whom it charmed, those whom it opposed, those whom it tamed, knew not what was being done for the generations which were to follow them. They knew not, while they heard of the household of God, and the universal brotherhood of man, that the most ancient and most familiar institution of their society, one without which they could not conceive its going on, —slavery,—was receiving the fatal wound of which, though late, too late, it was at last to die. They knew not, when they were touched by the new teaching about forgiveness and mercy, that a new value was being insensibly set on human life, new care and sympathy planted in society for human suffering, a new horror awakened at human bloodshed. They knew not, while they looked on men dying, not for glory or even country, but for

convictions and an invisible truth, that a new idea was springing up of the sacredness of conscience, a  
40 new reverence beginning for veracity and faithfulness. They knew not that a new measure was being established of the comparative value of riches and all earthly things, while they saw, sometimes with amazement, sometimes with inconsiderate imitativeness, the numbers who gave up the world, and all that was best as well as worst in it, for love of the eternal heritage—in order to keep themselves pure. They knew not of the great foundations laid for public duty and public spirit, in the obligations of  
50 Christian membership, in the responsibilities of the Christian clergy, in the never-forgotten example of One whose life had been a perpetual service, and who had laid it down as the most obvious of claims for those to whom He had bound Himself. They little thought of what was in store for civil and secular society, as they beheld a number of humble men, many of them foreigners, plying their novel trade of preachers and missionaries, announcing an eternal kingdom of righteousness, welcoming the  
60 slave and the outcast as a brother,—a brother of the Highest,—offering hope and change to the degraded sinner, stammering of Christ and redemption to the wild barbarian, worshipping in the catacombs, and meekly burying their dead, perhaps their wronged and murdered dead, in the sure hope of everlasting peace. Slowly, obscurely, imperfectly, most imperfectly, these seeds of blessing for society began to ripen, to take shape, to gain power. The time was still dark and wintry and tempestuous, and the night

was long in going. It is hard even now to discern 70 there the promise of what our eyes have seen. I suppose it was impossible then. It rather seemed as if the world was driving rapidly to its end, not that it was on the eve of its most amazing and hopeful transformation. But in that unhappy and desponding and unhonoured time, borne in the bosom of that institution and society which the world knew and knows as the Christian Church, there were present the necessary and manifold conditions of the most forward civilisation ; of its noblest features, 80 of its substantial good, of its justice, its order, its humanity, its hopefulness, its zeal for improvement.

*Lecture on "Civilisation after Christianity," 1872.*

## WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE (1809-1898).

### 27. SOUND NATIONAL FINANCE

WE have seen this country during the last few years without European war, but under a burden of taxation, such as, out of a European war, it never was called upon to bear ; we have also seen it last year under the pressure of a season of blight, such as hardly any living man can recollect ; yet, on looking abroad over the face of England, no one is sensible of any signs of decay, least of all can such an apprehension be felt with regard to those attributes which are perhaps highest of all, and on which most of all 10 depends our national existence—the spirit and courage of the country. It is needless to say that neither the sovereign upon the Throne, nor the nobles and

the gentry that fill the place of the gallant chieftains of the Middle Ages, nor the citizens who represent the invincible soldiery of Cromwell, nor the peasantry who are the children of those sturdy archers that drew the cross bows of England in the fields of France—none of these betray either inclination or tendency  
20 to depart from the tradition of their forefathers. If there be any danger which has recently in an especial manner beset us, I confess that, though it may be owing to some peculiarity in my position, or some weakness in my vision, it has seemed to me to be, during recent years chiefly, in our proneness to constant, and apparently almost boundless, augmentations of expenditure, and in the consequences that are associated with them. . . . Sir, I do trust that the day has come when a check has begun to be  
30 put to the movement in this direction; and I think, as far as I have been able to trace the sentiments of the House, and the indications of general opinion during the present session, that the tendency to which I have adverted is at least partially on the decline. I trust it will altogether subside and disappear. The spirit of the people is excellent. There never was a nation in the whole history of the world more willing to bear the heavy burdens under which it lies—more generously disposed to overlook the  
40 errors of those who have the direction of its affairs. For my own part, I hold that, if this country can steadily and constantly remain as wise in the use of her treasure as she is unrivalled in its production, and as moderate in the exercise of her strength as she is rich in its possession, that we may well cherish

the hope that there is yet reserved for England a great work to do on her own part and on the part of others, and that for many a generation to come she will continue to hold a foremost place among the nations of the world.

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*Speech in introducing the Budget, 1861.*

## 28. ENGLISH FOREIGN POLICY.

SIR, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk 10 to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition, older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honour and justice. And, sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to dress up the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy in the garb of British interests, and then, with a new and base idolatry, fall down 20 and worship them? Or are we to look, not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case, which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago—viz. that it

is the populations of those countries that will ultimately possess them—that will ultimately determine their abiding condition? It is to this fact, to this law, that we should look. There is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those unhappy people are still as yet making an effort to retrieve  
30 what they have lost so long, but have not ceased to love and to desire. I speak of those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion—a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen—stand on the rocks of Montenegro, and are ready now, as they have ever been during the 400 years of their exile from their fertile plains, to sweep down from their fastnesses and meet the Turks at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and of peace in those countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of  
40 Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you; they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that they do not seek alliance with Russia, or with any foreign power, but that they seek to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame—the greatest that exists on God's earth—is one that we thought  
50 united Europe was about to remove; but to removing which, for the present, you seem to have no efficacious means of offering even the smallest practical contribution. But, sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not

yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the Cabinet who would try to win it, if they were free to act on their own beliefs and aspirations. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize; but be assured that whether you 60 mean to claim for yourselves even a single leaf in that immortal chaplet of renown, which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and upon your own duty, I believe, for one, that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these provinces has sounded. So far as human eye can judge, it is about to be destroyed. The destruction may not come in the way or by the means that we should choose; but come this boon from what hands it may, it will be a noble 70 boon, and as a noble boon will gladly be accepted by Christendom and the world

*Speech in House of Commons, May 7, 1877.*

## JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900).

### 29. THE "PERFECT GENTLE KNIGHT."

FIRST, then, by industry you must fulfil your vow to your country; but all industry and earnestness will be useless unless they are consecrated by your resolution to be in all things men of honour; not honour in the common sense only, but in the highest. Rest on the force of the two main words in the great verse, *integer vitæ, scelerisque purus*.<sup>1</sup> You have vowed your life to England; give it her wholly—a bright,

<sup>1</sup> Perfect in life and pure from guilt



stainless, perfect life—a knightly life. Because you  
10 have to fight with machines instead of lances, there  
may be a necessity for more ghastly danger, but  
there is none for less worthiness of character, than  
in olden time. You may be true knights yet, though  
perhaps not *equites*; you may have to call yourselves  
“cannonry” instead of “chivalry,” but that is no  
reason why you should not call yourselves true men.  
So the first thing you have to see to in becoming  
soldiers is that you make yourselves wholly true.  
Courage is a mere matter of course among any  
20 ordinarily well-born youths; but neither truth nor  
gentleness is matter of course. You must bind them  
like shields about your necks; you must write them  
on the tables of your hearts. Though it be not  
exacted of you, yet exact it of yourselves, this vow  
of stainless truth. Your hearts are, if you leave  
them unstirred, as tombs in which a god lies buried.  
Vow yourselves crusaders to redeem that sacred  
sepulchre. And remember, before all things—for no  
other memory will be so protective of you—that the  
30 highest law of this knightly truth is that under which  
it is vowed to women. Whomsoever else you deceive,  
whomsoever you injure, whomsoever you leave un-  
aided, you must not deceive, nor injure, nor leave  
unaided, according to your power, any woman of  
whatever rank. Believe me, every virtue of the  
higher phases of manly character begins in this;—  
in truth and modesty before the face of all maidens;  
in truth and pity, or truth and reverence, to all  
womanhood.

*Address on “War,” Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, 1865.*

VISCOUNT MORLEY OF BLACKBURN  
(1838- ).

## 30. THE VALUE OF LITERATURE.

LITERATURE is one of the instruments, and one of the most powerful instruments, for forming character, for giving us men and women armed with reason, braced by knowledge, clothed with steadfastness and courage, and inspired by that public spirit and public virtue of which it has been well said that they are the brightest ornaments of the mind of man. Bacon is right, as he generally is, when he bids us read not to contradict and refute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and to consider. Yes, let us read to weigh and to consider. In the times before us that promise or threaten deep political, economical, and social controversy, what we need to do is to induce our people to weigh and consider. We want them to cultivate energy without impatience, activity without restlessness, inflexibility without ill-humour. I am not going to preach to you any artificial stoicism. I am not going to preach to you any indifference to money, or to the pleasures of social intercourse, or to the esteem and good-will of our neighbours, or to any other of the consolations and the necessities of life. But, after all, the thing that matters most, both for happiness and for duty, is that we should habitually live with wise thoughts and right feelings. Literature helps us more than other studies to this most blessed companionship of wise thoughts and

right feelings, and so I have taken this opportunity of earnestly commending it to your interest and  
30 care.

*Address to London University Extension Students,  
Feb. 26, 1887.*

H. H. ASQUITH (1852- ).

### 31. BRITAIN AND GERMANY.

I AM entitled to say, and I do so on behalf of this country—I speak not for a party, I speak for the country as a whole—that we made every effort any Government could possibly make for peace. But this war has been forced upon us. What is it we are fighting for? Every one knows, and no one knows better than the Government, the terrible incalculable suffering, economic, social, personal and political, which war, and especially war between the  
10 Great Powers of the world, must entail. There is no man amongst us sitting upon this bench in these trying days—more trying perhaps than any body of statesmen for a hundred years have had to pass through, there is not a man amongst us who has not, during the whole of that time, had clearly before his vision the almost unequalled suffering which war, even in a just cause, must bring about, not only to the peoples who are for the moment living in this country and in the other countries of the world, but  
20 to posterity and to the whole prospects of European civilisation. Every step we took we took with that vision before our eyes, and with a sense of responsi-

bility which it is impossible to describe. Unhappily, if—in spite of all our efforts to keep the peace, and with that full and overpowering consciousness of the result, if the issue be decided in favour of war—we have, nevertheless, thought it to be the duty as well as the interest of this country to go to war, the House may be well assured it was because we believe, and I am certain the country will believe, we are <sup>30</sup> unsheathing our sword in a just cause.

If I am asked what we are fighting for, I reply in two sentences. In the first place to fulfil a solemn international obligation, an obligation which, if it had been entered into between private persons in the ordinary concerns of life, would have been regarded as an obligation not only of law but of honour, which no self-respecting man could possibly have repudiated. I say, secondly, we are fighting to vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed, in <sup>40</sup> defiance of international good faith, by the arbitrary will of a strong and over-mastering Power. I do not believe any nation ever entered into a great controversy—and this is one of the greatest history will ever know—with a clearer conscience and stronger conviction that it is fighting not for aggression, not for the maintenance even of its own selfish interest, but that it is fighting in defence of principles, the maintenance of which is vital to the civilisation of the world. With a full conviction, not only of the <sup>50</sup> wisdom and justice, but of the obligations which lay upon us to challenge this great issue, we are entering into the struggle. . . .

Sir, I will say no more. This is not an occasion

for controversial discussion. In all that I have said, I believe I have not gone, either in the statement of our case or in my general description of the provision we think it necessary to make, beyond the strict bounds of truth. It is not my purpose—it  
60 is not the purpose of any patriotic man—to inflame feeling, to indulge in rhetoric, to excite international animosities. The occasion is far too grave for that. We have a great duty to perform, we have a great trust to fulfil, and confidently we believe that Parliament and the country will enable us to do it.

*Speech in House of Commons on moving the vote of Credit,  
Aug 6, 1914.*

## APPENDIX A.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN's speech at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863, at the consecration of part of the battle-field for a burial-ground for the fallen is one of the most perfect examples of oratory in the English language. As it could not be included among specimens of *British* oratory, it is added here.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865).

#### 32 SPEECH AT GETTYSBURG

FOUR score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot <sup>10</sup> dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the

great task remaining before us—that from these honoured  
 20 dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they  
 here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here  
 highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—  
 that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom ;  
 and that the government of the people, by the people, for  
 the people, shall not perish from the earth

## APPENDIX B.

### ORATORY IN THE POETS.

#### 33 SPEECH OF BRUTUS AFTER THE MURDER OF CAESAR.

ROMANS, countrymen, and lovers ! hear me for my cause,  
 and be silent, that you may hear : believe me for mine  
 honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may  
 believe : censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses,  
 that you may the better judge. If there be any in this  
 assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say, that  
 Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that  
 friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my  
 answer : not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome  
 10 more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves,  
 than that Caesar were dead, to live all free-men ? As Caesar  
 loved me, I weep for him ; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at  
 it ; as he was valiant, I honour him ; but, as he was ambitious,  
 I slew him. There is tears for his love ; joy for his fortune ;  
 honour for his valour : and death for his ambition. Who  
 is here so base that he would be a bondman ? If any, speak ;  
 for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would  
 not be a Roman ? If any, speak ; for him I have offended.  
 Who is here so vile that will not love his country ? If any,  
 20 speak ; for him I have offended. I pause for a reply.

*Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Act III. Sc. ii*

## 34 MARK ANTONY'S ORATION.

FRIENDS, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears ;  
 I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.  
 The evil that men do lives after them :  
 The good is oft interred with their bones :  
 So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus  
 Hath told you, Caesar was ambitious :  
 If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
 And grievously hath Caesar answered it.  
 Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—  
 (For Brutus is an honourable man,  
 So are they all, all honourable men)—  
 Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.  
 He was my friend, faithful and just to me :  
 But Brutus says, he was ambitious ;  
 And Brutus is an honourable man.  
 He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill :  
 Did this in Caesar seem ambitious ?  
 When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept :  
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff—  
 Yet Brutus says, he was ambitious ;  
 And Brutus is an honourable man.  
 You all did see that on the Lupercal  
 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
 Which he did thrice refuse : was this ambition ?  
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious ;  
 And, sure, he is an honourable man !  
 I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
 But here I am to speak what I do know.  
 You all did love him once, not without cause ;  
 What cause withholds you then to mourn for him ?  
 O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
 And men have lost their reason !—Bear with me :  
 My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
 And I must pause till it come back to me. . . .  
 But yesterday, the word of Caesar might

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- Have stood against the world : now lies he there,  
And none so poor to do him reverence.  
O masters ' if I were disposed to stir  
40 Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,  
I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,  
Who, you all know, are honourable men :  
I will not do them wrong , I rather choose  
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,  
Than I will wrong such honourable men  
But here's a parchment, with the seal of Caesar ;  
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will :  
Let but the commons hear his testament  
(Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read),  
50 And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds,  
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood ;  
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,  
And, dying, mention it within their wills,  
Bequeathing it, as a rich legacy,  
Unto their issue. . . .
- If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.  
You all do know this mantle ; I remember  
The first time ever Caesar put it on ,  
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,—  
60 That day he overcame the Nervii :—  
- Look, in this place, ran Cassius' dagger through :  
See what a rent the envious Casca made :  
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd ;  
And, as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,  
Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,  
As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd  
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no ' !  
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel :  
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him !  
70 This was the most unkindest cut of all :  
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,  
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,  
Quite vanquished him : then burst his mighty heart ;  
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,

Even at the base of Pompey's statua,  
 Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.  
 O, what a fall was there, my countrymen !  
 Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,  
 Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.—  
 O, now you weep ; and, I perceive, you feel  
 The dint of pity : these are gracious drops.  
 Kind souls ! What, weep you, when you but behold  
 Our Caesar's vesture wounded ? Look you here.  
 Here is himself, marr'd as you see, with traitors.—

80

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up  
 To such a sudden flood of mutiny.  
 They that have done this deed are honourable ;  
 What private griefs they have, alas ! I know not,  
 That made them do it : they are wise and honourable :  
 And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

90

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts :  
 I am no orator, as Brutus is ;  
 But as you know me all, a plain, blunt man,  
 That love my friend : and that they know full well  
 That gave me public leave to speak of him ;  
 For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,  
 Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech  
 To stir men's blood I only speak right on ;  
 I tell you that which you yourselves do know ;  
 Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths, too  
 And bid them speak for me : But, were I Brutus,  
 And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony  
 Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue  
 In every wound of Caesar that should move  
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny !

*Julius Caesar, Act III Sc. ii.*

### 35. HENRY V. BEFORE HARFLEUR.

ONCE more unto the breach, dear friends, once more ;  
 Or close the wall up with our English dead.  
 In peace there's nothing so becomes a man

- As modest stillness and humility :  
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears,  
 Then imitate the action of the tiger ,  
 Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,  
 Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage ;  
 Then lend the eye a terrible aspect ;  
 10 Let it pry through the portage of the head  
 Like the brass cannon ; let the brow o'erwhelm it  
 As fearfully as doth a galled rock  
 O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,  
 Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.  
 Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,  
 Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit  
 To his full height. On, on, you noblest English,  
 Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof !  
 Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,  
 20 Have in these parts from morn till even fought  
 And sheathed their swords for lack of argument :  
 Be copy now to men of grosser blood,  
 And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen,  
 Whose limbs were made in England, show us here  
 The mettle of your pasture ; let us swear  
 That you are worth your breeding ; which I doubt not ;  
 For there is none of you so mean and base,  
 That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.  
 I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,  
 30 Straining upon the start. The game's afoot :  
 Follow your spirit, and upon this charge  
 Cry " God for Harry, England, and Saint George ! "

*Shakespeare, Henry V., Act III. Sc. i.*

### 36. BEELZEBUB IN THE COUNCIL OF HELL.

*Which when Beelzebub perceiv'd ; than whom,  
 Satan except, none higher sat, with grave  
 Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd  
 A pillar of state ; deep on his front engraven  
 Deliberation sat and public care ;*

*And princely counsel in his face yet shone,  
 Majestic though in ruin ; sage he stood  
 With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear  
 The weight of mightiest monarchies ; his look  
 Drew audience and attention still as night* 10  
*Or summer's noon-tide air, while thus he spake.*

“ Thrones and Imperial Powers, offspring of Heav'n,  
 Ethereal Virtues ; or these titles now  
 Must we renounce, and changing style be call'd  
 Princes of Hell ? for so the popular vote  
 Inclines, here to continue, and build up here  
 A growing empire ; doubtless ; while we dream,  
 And know not that the King of Heav'n hath doom'd  
 This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat  
 Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt 20  
 From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league  
 Banded against his throne ; but to remain  
 In strictest bondage, though thus far remov'd,  
 Under th' inevitable curb, reserv'd  
 His captive multitude : for he, be sure,  
 In highth or depth, still first and last will reign  
 Sole King, and of his kingdom lose no part  
 By our revolt ; but over Hell extend  
 His empire, and with iron sceptre rule  
 Us here, as with his golden those in Heav'n. 30  
 What sit we then projecting peace and war ?  
 War hath determin'd us, and foil'd with loss  
 Irreparable : terms of peace yet none  
 Vouchsaf't or sought ; for what peace will be giv'n  
 To us enslav'd, but custody severe,  
 And stripes, and arbitrary punishment  
 Inflicted ? and what peace can we return,  
 But to our power hostility and hate,  
 Untam'd reluctance. and revenge though slow.  
 Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least 40  
 May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice  
 In doing what we most in suffering feel ?  
 Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need

## BRITISH ORATORS

With dangerous expedition to invade  
 Heav'n, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,  
 Or ambush from the deep. What if we find  
 Some easier enterprise ? There is a place  
 (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven  
 Err not) another world, the happy seat  
 50 Of some new race call'd Man, about this time  
 To be created like to us, though less  
 In power and excellence, but favour'd more  
 Of him who rules above, so was his will  
 Pronounc'd among the gods, and by an oath,  
 That shook Heaven's whole circumference, confirm'd.  
 Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn  
 What creatures there inhabit, of what mould,  
 Or substance, how endu'd, and what their power,  
 And where their weakness, how attempted best,  
 60 By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,  
 And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure  
 In his own strength, this place may lie expos'd  
 The utmost border of his kingdom, left  
 To their defence who hold it : here perhaps  
 Some advantageous act may be achiev'd  
 By sudden onset ; either with Hell-fire  
 To waste his whole creation, or possess  
 All as our own, and drive as we were driven,  
 The puny habitants ; or if not drive,  
 70 Seduce them to our party, that their God  
 May prove their foe, and with repenting hand  
 Abolish his own works. Thus would surpass  
 Common revenge, and interrupt his joy  
 In our confusion, and our joy upraise  
 In his disturbance ; when his darling sons  
 Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse  
 Their frail original, and faded bliss,  
 Faded so soon Advise if this be worth  
 Attempting, or to sit in darkness here  
 80 Hatching vain empires "

*Milton, Paradise Lost, II. 299-373.*

## NOTES.

1. 1. 12 conversation, way of life.

1. 28. religious houses. This was shortly after the abolition of the monasteries, which were called "religious houses" Latimer means that every house in which God-fearing men dwell deserves the title

3. "The instinctive genius of Cromwell from the very first created the strong nucleus of a regular army, which at last in discipline, in skill, in valour, reached the highest perfection ever attained by soldiers either in ancient or modern times. . So soon as, by the New Model, this system was extended to the whole army, the Civil War was at an end" (F Harrison, *Cromwell*)

5 Robert South had great fame as a preacher in the seventeenth century. Unlike Jeremy Taylor and other divines of his time, he avoided "similitudes" and flowery rhetoric and adopted a simple style

6. This famous speech is the composition of Johnson rather than of the elder Pitt. Johnson reported the debates in the House of Commons at this time for the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He had not been present at this debate, but worked up Pitt's speech from the account given to him by one who had heard it. He was afterwards remorseful, Boswell tells us, for "having been the author of fictions which had passed for realities". The speeches in the *Gentleman's Magazine* had indeed been widely accepted as genuine, and this one especially won immense admiration. See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ch 6

7, 8 The anonymous letters of "Junius" are so famous as rhetorical compositions that no apology is necessary for the insertion of these two extracts. The written invectives of "Junius" may be compared with Cicero's greatest Philippic (the Second) against Antony, which was never delivered, but only circulated in writing

13 "There was Burke, ignorant indeed or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers, but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination superior to every orator, ancient or modern"—Macaulay, in his account of the trial of Warren Hastings

16 Macaulay attributes to the younger Pitt "commanding, copious and sonorous eloquence"

The concluding Latin sentence is not an exact quotation, but an adaptation or reminiscence of Cicero, *Philippic* VII in 9.

21 l 36. Villèle and Polignac, ministers of Charles X. of France

23 l. 7 these ministers: Bright is appealing to ministers of religion in Scotland

28 Many years afterwards Mr A J Balfour said of the speech, from which this peroration is taken: "I never shall forget the impression it left on my mind. As a mere feat of physical endurance it was almost unsurpassed; as a feat of parliamentary courage, parliamentary skill, parliamentary endurance and parliamentary eloquence, I believe it will always be unequalled" (quoted in Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, II 566). Gladstone was 68 years of age when he delivered this speech

30. l 8. Bacon, *Essay* 50, "Of Studies"

32 The battle of Gettysburg, 1863, was the turning-point in the war between the Northern and Southern States. A part of the battle-field was bought by the State of Pennsylvania and kept for a burial-ground for those who had fallen in the fight. "On Nov. 19, 1863, it was duly consecrated with solemn ceremonies, on which occasion President Lincoln made a brief address, which has been thought, perhaps not without reason, to be the finest ever delivered on such an occasion" (Leland, *Life of Abraham Lincoln*)

33-36. For other fine examples of oratory in drama, see Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*; Ben Jonson, *Catiline*, Act V. Scene 5; Sir H. Taylor, *Philip Van Artevelde*.

33. l 1 lovers, friends.

l 4. censure, judge

35. l 10 portage, 'port-holes.'

l 13 confounded, destroyed.

l 18 fet, fetched, derived.

l 21 argument, matter.

l 29 ships, leash

36 The wonderful introduction to this speech gains in interest when we remember that Milton, as Latin Secretary to the Council of State under the Commonwealth, had special opportunities of hearing grave political debates

Some hints on style and arrangement in speeches and didactic compositions, and some remarks on oratory in the poets, will be found in Abbott and Seeley, *English Lessons for English People*.

l 48 fame, rumour.

l 59. attempted, attacked.

## SUBJECTS FOR SHORT COMPOSITIONS.

1 What light do the extracts from Queen Elizabeth and Oliver Cromwell throw upon the characters of the speakers ? (2, 3)

2 What do you know of " Junius " ? (7, 8)

3. What do you know of Burke's influence in his lifetime ? (10).

4 What do you know of Fox and Burke and the friendship between them ? (11).

5 What is the principle of " the balance of power " ? What English statesmen have specially sought to maintain it ? (16, 18).

6 Is war an evil and is it necessary ? (18, 25, 31)

7 The history of Montenegro (28)

8. England's relations with Turkey (28)

9. Chivalry mediæval and modern (29)

10 Make a list of words of Latin origin used by the eighteenth-century orators, and write down any simpler words that might be substituted

11 Collect the metaphors used by Burke and classify them according to their sources.

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advanced students*

12 " Rhetoric is only tolerable when it is disguised " Discuss this

13 " Metaphor is better suited to Prose than Simile " Is this true ? Discuss, with the aid of examples from this book

14 " Metaphor is briefer than literal statement." Illustrate

15 Explain the description of the Napoleonic government as " a stratoracy, elective, aggressive and predatory " Is it just ? (15)

16 " Reform that you may preserve " Does this seem to you sound advice ? Illustrate it from any constitutional questions (20).

17 Discuss the truth of Disraeli's view of the Feudal System (24).



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